

Wetlands summary

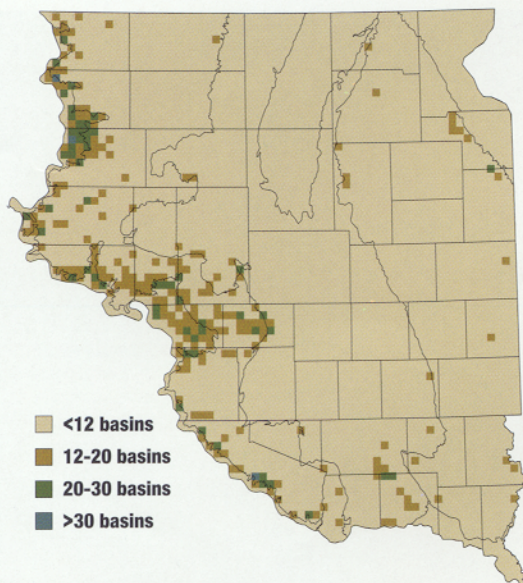
Nearly a million wetlands still exist in eastern South Dakota. These wetlands provide benefits that reach far beyond the borders of South Dakota to other states and Canadian provinces:

- Wetlands preserve biodiversity.
- Wetlands provide flood control.
- Wetlands recharge ground water.
- Wetlands stabilize stream flows.
- Wetlands improve water quality.
- Wetlands enhance quality of life.

Although eastern South Dakota still has a rich wetland resource, the future of that resource is not secure. Only about 25% of remaining wetlands are currently protected by easements or fee-title ownership by concerned agencies. Approximately 75% have no legal protection and are subject to various forms of alteration or destruction.

Recent wetland research by staff and graduate students of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at South Dakota State University in conjunction with the National Wetlands Inventory and recent technological advances such as geographic information systems have provided agricultural groups and natural resource managers with important new information about the distribution and characteristics of wetlands and their values to wildlife, livestock, and society as a whole. On-going and future research will continue to improve our understanding of the functions of wetlands and their value to humans. This understanding is crucial to making informed decisions about the role of wetlands in eastern South Dakota in the next century.

Stocks dams and other impoundments/10mi².



Creating wetlands in healthy rangeland, like this stock dam in Buffalo County, is often a boon to wildlife